

2.

Consolation for PARENTS UPON THE Loss of Children:

With particular Application to
The Inhabitants of
FAVERSHAM in Kent,
On Account of the
SMALL-POX,
While much, and Fatal among
them.

By **SHA. COOKE, M. A.**

— *I take from them their Strength, the Joy of their Glory, the Desire of their Eyes, and that wherupon they set their Minds, their Sons and their Daughters.* EZK 24. 25.

Make me to hear of Joy and Gladness, that the Bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Ps. 5 1, 8.

— *In the World ye have Tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the World.* Joh 16 33.

L O N D O N ,

Printed for R. KNAPE, at the Bishop's
Head in St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1725.

Advertisement.

THO the Small-Pox is more among us, than it has been for several Years, Reports, as is usual, have much exceeded the Instances of our Calamity.

For, if Comparisons may be allow'd to lessen Misfortunes (as sometimes they are) our Numbers considered, we have not, for some Years past, had more Sickness and Mortality, than most other Places.

And besides this particular Distemper, we have not known less Illness of any other sort, present.



Consolation for Parents
UPON THE
Loss of Children, &c.

OUR Saviour's remarkable Expressions and Behaviour towards Children, are thus represented after a very engaging and obliging manner :

They brought young Children
to Christ, that he should
touch them; and his Dis-
ciples rebuked those that
Mark 10.
v. 13, &c.

A 3 brought

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brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God.

Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little Child, he shall in not enter therein.

And he took them up in his Arms, put his Hands upon them, and blessed them.

Whereupon, our Church, in Publick Baptism, suitably observes,

‘ He commanded the Children
‘ to be brought unto him: how
‘ he blamed those, that would
‘ have

upon the Loss of Children. 7

have kept them from him ; how he exhorteth all Men to follow their Innocency : Ye perceive, how by his outward Gesture and Deed he declared his good Will towards them ; for he embraced them in his Arms, he laid his Hands upon them, and blessed them.

And is there not here a special Reason given for such Candor and Goodness towards them, by our Lord's saying as he doth, *Of such is the Kingdom of God?*

Whereby is plainly signified, that young Children are certainly entitled to all the present Benefits of the Christian Church, and the future Rewards of it.

Whereupon

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Whereupon our Church in particular, makes this Pious, True, and Comfortable Observation:

“ * It is certain by God’s Word, that Children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual Sin, are undoubtedly saved.

And this memorable Assertion proceeds from the Divine Authority of our Lord, upon this solid Foundation laid down by him, *Of such is the Kingdom of God.* A Doctrine at all times welcome,

* At the End of Publick Baptism.

now

upon the Loss of Children. 9

now much more seasonable to be considered, from the numerous Instances that we have about us, of many young Children, especially, that are seized with a Distemper, Small in its Name, not in its Malignity; that has removed several Children into the *Kingdom of God.*

Whereupon, my present Business is, to make some Christian Improvements of this singular Providence of Heaven, from this severe Infliction, and the Instances of so many that now lie sick, are dying, and have died among us.

To take occasion, I say, from hence to lay down some Motives

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tives or Arguments for the Comfort of Parents, especially upon the Loss or Death of their Children. Which, I am verily persuaded, is one of the truest and deepest Sorrows that does or can affect Human Nature.

Yet I hope, it will appear, we are not without Relief and Support, if we would duly and seriously consider,

First. That there are no certain Laws, nor fixed Rules for Precedency or Priority in the Case of Death, or Mortality.

The Nature and Condition of Human Affairs, and the Result of Things here in this World, and

upon the Loss of Children, 11

and our daily Experience, shew us abundantly, that there is no Security or Dependence on any State or Condition of Human Life.

The Father may die before the Son, or the Son before the Father. And is it not visible and notorious in the World, That the Advanced in Years have known abundance of all Ages and Degrees called to their long Homes before them ?

So that from any Instance of this kind, we may say in like manner with the Apostle,

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the Fiery Tryal which is to try you,
as
1 Pet. 4.12.

12 *Consolation for Parents
as though some strange thing hap-
pened unto you.*

Such Instances, and many of this nature. are, we must know, very reconcilable with the Changes and Uncertainties of this present Life. Whereupon the Apostle toour purpose tells us,

That no Man should be moved with these Afflictions, for your selves know that we are appointed thereunto.

Secondly, Upon such an Incident or Occasion, we may justly and profitably reflect upon our selves, so as to esteem it, and be moved by it, as the Hand of God, or his Affliction and due Punishment upon us, not on them.

upon the Loss of Children. 13

I will bereave them of Children, says God by the Prophet, in the Severity of his Wrath and Threatening. And if so, Wherefore doth a living Man complain, a Man for the Punishment of his Sins?

Jer. 15. 7.

Lam. 3. 39.

But rather conclude from thence, and say,

I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.

Mic. 7. 9.

And in the midst of this Judgment God may have remembred Mercy towards us.

B

We

14 Consolation for Parents

We might have been too fond of them, or depended too much upon them ; so that God, by taking them to himself, may have more of our Thoughts and Service ; and we may become dearer to him, than our dearest Children could have been to us, by the Exercise of those Duties hereupon, of Patience, Submission, and Resignation to the Will of God. *For in my Wrath I smote thee, but in my Favour have I had Mercy on thee.*

Thirdly, Upon such a severe Instance, or Tryal of Providence as we have now before us, we may, and should receive present Comfort; from a Belief, or Consciousness

sciousness to our selves, that we have, while our deceased Children were living, discharged or performed the Parts of our Place or Relation towards them, with a regard to their Good and Interest, in all respects that Nature, Reason and Religion required from us.

Speaking of the like Case, says a noted Author of old, ' That which is the greatest and firmest Consolation, is, that they are not altogether taken from us, but remov'd from our Sight and Company for a short time.

' So that when we meet at that term of Life which Nature has set us, we shall presently re enjoy their Company, and have again

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‘ sweet Converse and Fellowship
‘ with them :

So that, when we meet them again at the Great Day, as we certainly shall, and very likely, know them too, it may be with Joy, and not with Grief, as we part now ; and that our Joy will then encrease, from the Approbation of God, the Testimony of our Children, and our own Consciences fully and clearly discharged, when we liv'd and parted in this Vale of Tears and Sorrow.

Whereupon, we may piously repeat and apply those Words of the Prophet, *A Voice was heard in Rama, Lamentation and bitter, Mourning ; Rachel weeping for her Children,*

Jerem. 31. 15.

upon the Loss of Children. 17

Children, refused to be comforted, because they were not.

Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy Voice from Weeping, and thine Eyes from Tears ; for thy Work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the Land of the Enemy.

And there is Hope in the End, saith the Lord, that thy Children shall come again to their own Border.

Fourthly, For our further Consolation in this Case, a very Great and True one indeed, we should consider their undoubted Welfare in the other World : Of such is the Kingdom of God.

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And as we at the Beginning, cited from our Church-Sentiment of those that die in Baptismal Infancy, or unspotted Purity, they are undoubtly saved.

And if so, we must not weep for them ; not for them, certainly, those pure innocent Souls, that in their White Robes, Emblems of their Innocency, *follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.*

The *Thracians*, we are told, did usually bewail the Birth, and rejoice at the Death of their Children : For the Conclusion of their Life, says my Author, they reckoned as the End of their Miseries, and the Port, or Haven

of

of

upon the Loss of Children. 19

of Rest ; but the Beginning of their Life, with Regret they look'd upon as their Entrance upon Sorrows and Afflictions.

Would you see your Child again labouring under Pain, Sickness and Diseases ?

Would you behold him again bespread all over with that noisome Disease, now so common ? God remove it from us !

Would you once more see your growing Youth of either Sex, strugling with the Tortures of Death, breathing out his Last with frightful Groans, Shrieks or Agonies ?

Would

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Would you cruelly wish your beloved Child, or Children, to become again subject to all the Sufferings of Death and Mortality?

Or, which is worse, Would you impiously wish them to return to you, out of the Paradise they are now in ; and for this sorrowful State of ours, be dispossess'd of the Joys in Heaven?

With due Thoughts of Reason and Religion about you, consider; I beseech you, if this be not your Case, who lament for them that are free from all Troubles, and possess of Happiness beyond Expression.

From

From these Thoughts, it would shame a Christian, to be told of that Instance in Heathen Theology, relating to the *Grecian Argia*, that Mother of two Sons; who having received or experienc'd a remarkable Instance of Duty or Regard from them; and praying that the greatest Blessings that could be conferr'd on obedient Children, might be their Portion, found them both dead the next Day; Receiving them into the other World, beirg the happiest Recompence.

I shall choose to conclude this Particular, with that most admirable and exemplary Instance of the Holy and Blessed Virgin
Mary,

22 Consolation for Parents

Mary, the Mother of our Lord, with what is said of her by St. Joh. 19. 25. *John, There stood by the Cross of Jesus, his Mother.*

Hereupon were certainly verified the Words spoken of her by Lu. 2. 35. another Evangelist *Yea, a Sword shall pierce thro' thy own Soul.*

What a Sight must it be, for her to behold such a Son !

The Son of her Womb, and the Pro. 31. 2. Son of her Vows, as Solomon speaks, suffering so much Shame and Indignity, with such Sorrows, Agonies and Tortures !

See

upon the Loss of Children. 23

See here a most admirable Pattern of mighty Patience, of profound Faith, of invincible Courage and Magnanimity of Soul and Spirit. She stood firm and resolute, by the Cries of Jesus, when he was Bleeding, Dying, crying out with his last Breath,

My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?

Let others, in their short Circumstances of Grief and Sorrow, learn from her, and say in her Words,

My

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*My Soul doth magnifie the Lord,
and my Spirit hath rejoiced in God
my Saviour.*

*Fifthly, As another way or
Means for lessening Sorrow on such
Occasions, (some there must, and
will be,) (*

Let us consider the Danger of
the Miscarriages there might be
in those that are taken away in
their earlier Days.

'Tis said of *Abijah*, who was to
succeed his Father in the Kingdom
of *Israel*,

*The Child shall dye, and all
Israel shall mourn for him, and
bury*

bury him; for he only of Jerobo-
am shall come to the
grave, because in him
there is found some good thing to-
ward the Lord God of Israel.

He was not like to be guilty of,
or so much as subject to the Sins
of his Father and Fore fathers.

So that being taken away from
an Evil to come, as this Prophet
speaks, we may profitably apply
it in this Case, especially to Moral
Evils.

Which, an early Decease, an
immature End, may, and certain-
ly doth obviate and prevent.

C

Tis

26 Consolation for Parents

"Tis not an unprofitable Sence
that is couch'd in that Saying of
the Greeks,

He dies young that God loves.

Many a Parent that has seen the
unhappy Use of good natural
Parts and Endowments, and the
miserable Abuse of a Religious,
careful and generous Education ;
have been tempted to wish, as
the Scripture speaks, their Mothers
to have had a *Miscarrying Womb,*
and dry Breasts ; or to say, *It had*
been good for them if they had never
been born.

But such as This, is not the
Grief, Care, or Concern of those,
whom God is pleased to try and
exercise

upon the Loss of Children. 27

exercise with an early Removal of their dear and beloved Children.

Who may, and ought to be hereupon comforted with these Words of the Prophet, Isa. 57. 1,
Considering that the Righteous is taken away from the Evil to come : He shall enter into Peace, they shall die in their Beds.

Sixthly, As another Thought, or Consideration on the Decease, or Removal of our Children, It may not be amiss, but rather helpful, to recollect sometimes, what may have been virtuous, good, commendable, or desirable in them.

C. 2.

But

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But herein, you'll say, many are too apt and inclinable of themselves; and dwelling continually on the Sweetness or Excellency of their Nature or Carriage; and what is valuable or Praiseworthy in their deceased Children, may too much afflict themselves by it; as is very possible, and too common.

Quite contrary to the Use and Practice that wise and good Men make from the Remarks or Refl^ct^g upon their Children dead and gone, that have been good, virtuous and valuable.

How wisely was it done of *Xenophon*, says the *Roman* Orator, who

who in the Performance of sacred Offices of Religion, having an Account brought him of his Son's falling in Battel, thereupon profess'd solemnly, he had more Satisfaction from the Thoughts of his Son's dying bravely, than he had Trouble for his Death.

‘ And History (says he) tells us of *Pericles*, that being in the space of four Days depriv'd of two Sons, eminent for their Parts and Actions, he was so firm and regular in his Sorrow for them, that he did not in the least change or vary in the accustomed way or manner of his Behaviour.

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*The Righteous shall be had in
Pl. 112.6. everlasting remembrance.
The Memory of the Just is
blessed.*

And upon the Recollection of
such, that have proceeded from us,
tho' now no more,

We have Reason, very great
Reason, to be chearful in our
selves, and thankful to God, that
any of ours have been Instruments
of his Glory, have been, and done
good in their Generation, or are
received in their Innocency into
the Mansions of Divine Bliss and
Mercy.

Whom

upon the Loss of Children. 31

Whom we may therefore hope
and expect to meet with Joy and
Consolation at the last Day.

*So shall we ever be with the
Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with
these Words.*

Seventhly, Another Advice or
Direction to such as are thus sor-
rowful or dejected, is,

That they would employ them-
selves in some convenient or ne-
cessary Busines, suitable to their
Way, Genius or Capacity.

Which may be proper and
seasonable, as upon other Accounts,
so

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so likewise for diverting the Thoughts of excessive Grief or Trouble.

For, to be constantly pensive and musing upon one Matter, especially when uneasy, grievous and afflictive, must be very irksome and oppressive. And if too much insisted on, continued and indulged, no wonder if it prove intolerable, and too much for us, and end in that 1 Cor.7.10.
Sorrow that worketh Death.

Whereas such Application to Business as is mentioned, and Industry in it, does not only divert sad Reflections, careful and anxious Thoughts, and turn Care into

upon the Loss of Children. 33

into a different Current ; but due Industry in honest Business, is in it self a commendable Virtue, and a Christian Duty, that will engage the Divine Providence to protect, assist and support us.

Eightly, Those that are weary and heavy laden with such Sorrow and Affliction, I would, and do advise, to apply to soon as may be, to the House of God, and Publick Service of the Church.

And I cannot but justly blame the too common Practice of most People, who do, upon their worldly Sorrows, Sufferings or Afflictions, and the Loss or Removal of Friends or Children, keep from the publick Worship and Divine Ordinances of God. Which

Which ought certainly to be much more regarded and observed by them on such Occasions, agreeable to Solomon's Sentiment relating to the Publick Service or Worship of God.

*Whatsoever Plague, whatsoever
1 Kin. 8. Sickness there be ; What-
37, &c. soever Prayer or Suppli-
cation be made by any Man : Then
bear thou in Heaven, thy dwelling-
place, forgive and do, and give to
every Man according to his Ways,
whose Heart thou knowest.*

Contrary to this, you may have observ'd,

That

That Troubles, Sorrows or Afflictions occasioned by Sufferings, Losses or Calamities, especially by the Death of Friends or Relations, shall detain People from the House of God, and the Solemn Publick Duties and Services of Religion.

As if upon such Occasions they were to lessen their Devotions towards God, and become more negligent and remiss in his Service.

I speak it the rather, and the more plainly, because it so much practised, and so little taken notice of.

For

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For if there be a Duty, whereby a melancholy Parent, when deprived of a beloved Child; when a sorrowful Widower or Widow; a disappointed Expectant; an unfortunate or ruined Dealer; a Loser or Sufferer in any kind, would be reliev'd in his Thoughts, eased in his Mind or Spirit, or would be effectually comforted or supported; it should be, to repair immediately, and so soon as may be, to the Christian Church, the solemn Assembly of God's People.

To resort to these publick Places, and the sacred Ordinances in them, full of Divine Help and Consolation.

Ps. 122. 1. *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the House of the Lord.*

Spiritual Gladness is the best Remedy for Temporal Sorrows ; and such is certainly to be found in the solemn Worship and Service of God, under all kinds of Suffering and Affliction.

This is a better Expedient, certainly better, than to repine and murmur over our Griefs and Misfortunes in retir'd Melancholy and Tears.

It is a reasonable Practice, and what is, I think, our Duty to observe, on the first Onset, and the beginning of Sorrows.

D

If

38 *Consolation for Parents*

If I have been somewhat long on this Subject, 'tis the more excusable, as I observ'd, from the slender Notice taken of the too common Practice in many neglecting the Holy Divine Worship and the Sacred Offices of Religion, by reason of that Sorrow and Affliction, that should rather further and promote it.

Since, as our Lord assures us,
Matt. 18.20. *Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.* Which is indeed, observed by too few.

For

For were these Thoughts of God's being there present, to behold, assist and reward us, believ'd by them, how could any be remiss or indifferent on these Occasions?

This, Christianly and piously observ'd, would help to ease our Minds chear our Hearts, and quiet all our Murmurs and Complaints.

In my Distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God, and he did bear my Voice out of his Temple, and my Cry did enter into his Ears.

^{2 Sam. 27}
7.

D 2

Ninthly,

40 Consolation for Parents

Ninthly, The concluding Advice or Direction upon such like Occasion, is, to remind us, that we are to follow them.

Wherupon, nothing is more seasonable, necessary and instructive, than those Words of *David*,

Now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

This due and wise Thought dry'd up his Tears, lessen'd his Sorrow and his Grief for the deceas'd Child.

Grief,

upon the Loss of Children. 41

Grief which is certainly unprofitable to the Departed, may be, and often is, disserviceable to the Living; especially when there is, as here intimated by *David*, another Thought to employ us, and another Work to be done upon it.

To entertain our selves with the serious Assurance of following Those that have thus gone before us; Which, if duly regarded, must prevail with us to fit, prepare and qualify our selves accordingly.

And here it may be again seasonable to remind you of the Occasion of this Subject, so as to recollect the remarkable Providence

D 3

42. *Consolation for Parents.*

dence of God, with respect to that calamitous Distemper, and the mortal Instances of suffering by it, so very frequent among us. For

Isa. 26. 9. when thy Judgments are on the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn righteousness.

Can we hear, or behold, what is every where about us, without expressing or shewing some suitable Behaviour upon such a remarkable Occasion ?

If it be demanded, what that should be ? Certainly, the least that we can do, and which seems absolutely necessary hereupon, is to become more zealous and constant than ordinary, in all, and especially

especially in our Publick Prayers and Devotions, for the sake of those that are sick and dying, and those that are yet living and well.

That *the Hand of the Lord is very heavy upon us*, is unquestionable, and by most, I believe, much lamented. And if so, where is a Remedy, and a sure one, for this sad Disease ?

'Tis with hearty, humble and devout Prayers to call upon God for seasonable Help, Relief and Comfort.

There are many, you hear at Church, that desire to be pray'd for at this time, and upon this Occasion. Let

44 Consolation for Parents

Let us have many of you daily
to pray with us for them

You cannot better serve your
selves and them in these Streights
and Difficulties, than in thus con-
joyning with the Church Prayers
and Petitions for your Friends,
Neighbours and Acquaintance,
lying so sadly diseased on their
uneasie, sick and dying Beds.

Can you stay at home (as too
many of you do) and keep from
Church, where you might be so
helpful to such Numbers that need
and desire your Prayers and Pity ?

Try

Try the Experiment. If you would be more secure and healthy, be more frequent and numerous in the House of God, where you are called to Daily Devotion.

* And it should be specially remembred by you, when so many languishing Objects call for

* Warning being given to the People by the Toiling of a Bell, we wish every Householder dwelling within half a Mile of the Church, to come, or send one, at least, of his Household, fit to join with the Minister in Prayers. *Canon 15.*

our

46 *Consolation for Parents*
our Spiritual Assistance there.
And above all,

Be perswaded to frequent the
Holy Communion, that is so often
administred among us.

This will engage God to favour,
bless and preserve *Us* and *Ours*;
Strengthen and support us under
our Losses, Difficulties and Af-
flictions; and will most effectually
prepare us for that certain Great
Change that is approaching to
every one cf us.

Now, our Lord Jesus Christ
himself, and God, even
our Father, which hath
loved us, and given us
everlasting

² Thess. 12.
16, 17.

upon the Loss of Children. 47
everlasting Consolation and good
Hope through Grace, comfort your
Hearts, and establish you in every
good Word and Work.

F I N I S.

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